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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002024

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAQIYYA VENTS OVER IRAN, PROVINCIAL ELECTION  
PREPARATIONS, AND THE U.S.

Classified By: PolCounselor Matt Tueller; reasons 1.4(b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary and Comment: A group of Iraqiyya leaders assembled by former PM Iyad Allawi for a June 29 meeting with Special Advisors Krajieski and Gray were vociferously anti-Iran and blamed the U.S. for what they claimed is Iran's current political and economic domination of Iraq. They complained the international community is failing to support secular forces in Iraq and called for a robust international effort to monitor upcoming provincial elections. They were not particularly well-informed about the most likely version of the elections law to be voted on by the Council of Representatives (CoR) in early July, but they had heard there will be a deal to postpone Kirkuk elections by six months. Allawi allowed others to speak freely, and appeared to use the meeting as much as an Iraqiyya party building exercise as an opportunity to delve deeply into substantive issues with the USG. End summary and comment.

¶2. (C) Special Advisors for northern and southern Iraq (respectively) Thomas Krajieski and Gordon Gray met with former Iraqi PM Iyad Allawi and a dozen Iraqiyya figures June 29. Allawi's colleagues -- Shia and Sunni, religious and secular, tribal leaders and members of Parliament, hailing from Baghdad and Mosul and in between -- took turns complaining that Iraq is now dominated politically and economically by Iran (and that the U.S. is responsible). Asked what the U.S. should do, an MP from Nasariyah said "kill Iranian spies." An MP from Diyala called President Talabani and PM al-Maliki "ambassadors" of Tehran. Another accused Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani of ties to the Iranian Mukhabarat (intelligence service) and said that at least the Sadrists were a national movement. Asked whether al-Maliki's decision to order a military attack on Shia criminal elements in Basrah this spring was evidence of diminishing sectarianism, one MP alleged al-Maliki had warned Iranian agents ahead of time so they could flee. Possibly sensing that things were running a bit out of control, Allawi jumped in to remark that it is important to listen to views from a variety of Iraqis.

¶3. (C) A second conversation theme was the lack of support from the international community for liberal political movements in Iraq. An impassioned tribal leader from central Iraq accused the U.S. of fueling sectarianism after 2003 and complained that we opposed Allawi's efforts to promote secular government at every turn. Regarding provincial elections, Allawi and his colleagues argued strongly for a broad international monitoring effort. They have little faith in the mechanism of elections and urged that the UN redouble efforts to bring in observers and that MNF/I troops guard polling places directly rather than just provide overwatch for Iraqi troops. Senior Advisor Krajieski acknowledged the importance of monitors, but noted security

and logistical difficulties. Several Iraqiyya members called for "rolling elections," arguing that the military could lock down the borders of each province in turn and that the elections commission could employ impartial elections workers from outside that province. Senior Advisor Krajeski told the group that election experts had concluded that rolling elections would be vulnerable to voter fraud.

¶4. (C) The group, in general, may not have been well informed about the current state of negotiations on the elections law. MP Osama al-Najafi predicted the CoR would vote July 1 to postpone elections in Kirkuk at least six months. He also claimed there had been no progress on resolving the issues of women,s representation and the use of religious symbols on ballots. (It is not clear there is agreement yet on Kirkuk and there has been some progress on women,s representation.) Another Iraqiyya leader claimed the CoR would approve a combination open and closed list system, even though it seems the draft law will settle on an open list system.

¶5. (C) Several times, Allawi said that an alternative to elections could be the formation of a government of national unity (a government he seemed willing to lead). Allawi said that disarmament of militias and formation of a military mixed along ethnic, sectarian, and political lines could be accomplished by some careful diplomacy, including with the Jaysh al-Mahdi (if maybe not with JAM Special Groups). Allawi said he would travel north to meet with Masoud Barzani some time soon. He said he had spoken recently with Turkish PM Erdogan, who impressed him with his "positive view" toward

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the Kurds.  
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